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WOMAN'S INFLUENCE IN POLITICS:

AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED BY

HENRY WARD BEECHER,

AT THE

COOPER INSTITUTE, NEW YORK,

Thursday Evening, Feb. 2d, 1860.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY R. F. WALLCUT,
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ADDRESS

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HENRY WARD BEECHER,

AT THE

COOPER INSTITUTE, NEW YORK,

THURSDAY EVENING, 2nd OF MAY, 1860.

REPORTED BY E. H. BARTLEY.
NEW YORK:
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ADDRESS.

On a night so bitterly cold, in mid-winter, only warm hearts would bring so many of you hither. It is just that which this cause needs, — warm hearts.

I do not propose to speak upon that general theme, *women's rights;* nor to raise the long-debated and unimportant question of *the equality of the sexes.* It will scarcely be denied that men are superior to women, as men; and that women are immeasurably superior to men, as women; while both of them together are more than a match for either of them separately.

But the only question needful for the purpose which I have in view is this: Are women, as much as men, in the education and development of society, fitted for enlarged functions, and shall they be allowed, like men, to discharge all offices of life for which they are fitted?

Since the beginning, men have grown more and more valuable. I do not refer to that fundamental value derived to us from our relations to God, and which are the same in all, unaffected by barbarism or civilization, and are the foundations on which stand all secondary rights, civil and social. But, while man's spiritual value does not change nor grow, his secular value does. As members of civil society, men are valuable by the amounts which they severally add to the social, moral, or civil elements of the commonwealth. The wise, diligent, ingenious, trustworthy, frugal, enterprising, religious-minded citizen is worth vastly more to society than the negligent, wasteful, and indolent man. Whatever apparent exceptions may appear, men have increased in power from age to age, and are of more political and industrial worth at this time than ever before. They are worth more as mechanics, husbandmen, and laborers; as inventors and factors; as civilians and citizens. Man's capacities of thought and execution have increased, and are increasing. We eagerly expect greater development. This is the boast of our times, and

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progress has become a banner-word and rallying-cry. The age is progressive, not so much by the things that are done, as by the men that can do them. When we boast of progress, we do not mean in roads and engines, but in Ericssons and Stephensons; not ships and steamers, but Steers and Brunels; not dwellings and art, but architects and artists; not good laws and beneficent institutions, but good citizens and wise statesmen. It is man that is developed, and growing every age to higher capacity. And already men are on tiptoe of expectation. All the past is twilight. They look for the full light in coming days. The history of man is yet in the future. The past is seminal and germinal. The future is to have the blossom and the fruit.

But we have out-grown the old-world idea that *men* could be circumscribed in function, except by the conditions of their own being. They are no longer born to hereditary trades, denied their rights of education, barred by any custom or law from pursuits to which they have aptitudes, or hindered from doing whatever right thing under the heavens they have a power to do well. It is established, that *where there is power, there may also be function.* There is no restriction or limitation to the normal application of a man's powers. He may prove his faculties in any direction, and do whatever is right to be done in any department of life. A man may invade a woman's territory without hindrance, if he pleases, and sew or knit, wash or bake, cook or nurse, for a living. He may range through the whole scale of occupations, restricted by nothing but the limitations of his own gifts.

Now the question which we propose is two-fold: Is woman, like man, a creature in whom progressive civilization develops higher capacities and new aptitudes? And is there any reason why woman should not be permitted to follow her aptitudes and capacities, and to do whatever she can do well? Why should there be one law for man and another for woman, in the use of natural gifts?

In the growth of civilization, women have steadily risen, and have enlarged their sphere and multiplied their functions. May we not reasonably expect that, hereafter, the same development will proceed? Are there not for woman, as for man, new applications of power, new spheres of influence? Or is man the true fruit of the human race, and woman only a blossom, good to give him a start, then perishing to let him swell to full proportion?

Consider the lesson of history. How much has woman advanced in variety of functions and in versatility of powers! She was once an article of merchandize, and is still among savages. She was secluded, and not accounted an equal member even among her own family. Her name in many nations has been a synonym for all that is weak, vain, and even contemptible. She has been, in some periods of the world, denied the rights of social life; and, by arguments just such as are now employed to bar her further usefulness, it has been declared that she ought not to be educated, that her province was subordinate, and her duty the service of the coarser man. The educated woman of our days would have been the wonder or the horror of early civilizations. She has attained, and holds without remark, a degree of liberty and various efficiency which would have violated the customs and shocked the prejudices of olden days. At each change, at every upward step, have stood those pleaders, whose undegenerate posterity are yet in the same manner reasoning, affirming that already she was in her right place, and should stay where Providence placed her. For the men who reason with faces prone to the earth, think always that the state to which the world has grown in this day is all that God meant that it should ever grow. Men of great conceit have ever thought that Time was ripe in them. At length woman dawned into literature, and changed the spirit of letters. When she became a reader, men no longer wrote as if for men. She enforced purity and higher decorum. When woman came as a reader and a writer, then again men saw that guiding star which led them where the young child of Christian purity lay. For, after all, it is the Pen that is the tongue of the world; and a woman's hand is becoming more influential than the orator's mouth.

Woman has also advanced to a higher sphere as a teacher, and all are beginning to feel, although it does not yet appear what she is to do, that a new life is opened to her. Thus, step by step, against prejudices and arguments of her unfitness, against rude pushes downward, and much advice as to her proper duties, (which in the main have been the drudgeries that men disliked,) woman has advanced to a wider plane. to higher duties, to a liberty of following freely her own natural gifts, and to the reluctant recognition of her right to do whatever she could do well!

Nor have the prophecies that, like bats, have flitted about her, been fulfilled. In the augmentation of her liberty and the enlargement of her sphere, she has forsaken no duty of home, and lost no grace of tenderness and love. She has become a better mother, a better wife, daughter, sister, friend, by just that enlargement which it was predicted would unsex her. Experience has shown that as women are made to be worth more to society at large, and in public interests, they become richer at home, and are capable of building *it* better, and administering its duties and affections more skilfully and refinedly. Woman is not best in the family in those communities where she is most secluded. She is richest in all household excellencies in those societies where she has liberty of widest activity, and motives to the exercise of her talents upon the largest scale. That vulgar maxim, worn smooth in fools' mouths, that a woman ought to stay at home, and take care of her husband's clothes and her children's food, is a switch cut from that great tree of Arrogance under which despotic men have always sat, and from which the strong have always cut their bludgeons and cudgels wherewith to strike down or chastise the weak. A woman is better fitted for home who is also fit for something else. It is largeness, it is generous culture, it is power made skilful by exercise, that make both men and women rich in domestic life. Whatever makes her a better thinker, a larger-minded actor, a deeper-thoughted observer, a more potent writer or teacher, makes her by just so much a better wife and mother. No one is a better friend for being ignorant. No one is a more tender companion for being weak and helpless. Our homes demand great hearts and strong heads; but these need the culture of open air and the free heavens. They are not of the hot-bed or the conservatory.

But, although women are like men in this, that they are susceptible, indefinitely, of improvement, of augmentation of power, of new applications of that power, yet we must not suppose that they are men over again, with only another name. The virile or the masculine influence and the feminine influence should be wedded as much in the thought world as in the physical world. They are two, they are different; and that is the very reason of their power when coördinated. Man, as a characteristic creature, thinks from the physical and the passional stand-point; and this gives him power and

outward victory. Woman thinks from the stand-point of affection and moral sentiment; and this gives her purity and rectitude. Now man, from his organization and education, taking the stronger and coarser and more outward forms, and woman, taking the serener and higher and more inward forms, united together, constitute the whole trunk, leaf, and blossom, and make the perfect one. Each sex has something of the other's gifts, and each has a superiority of its own over the other; and the highest form of influence on the earth is that which blends both the peculiar woman-influence and the man-influence.

I do not ask, then, that woman should change her nature. That would spoil every thing. We want her *as* a woman, and because she is a woman — not a man. We do not ask that she shall do what man does, as man does it; we ask that she shall do in her way the things that man does in his way. We ask that she shall bring the woman-mind into those functions which have always needed it, which will always be partial without it, and which will ripen to their full disclosure of beauty and utility with it.

Therefore, we seek not to unsex woman, but to unite in public affairs what God put together, and what, from the beginning of the world, men have been keeping separate — namely, man's life and woman's life. I know of no reason why woman should not walk with equal steps and hand in hand with man from the cradle to the throne, and from the throne to the grave. There is not one thing that man ought to do, there is not one thing that ought to be done, which woman ought not to be permitted to do, if she has the capacity for doing it. For wherever there is a gift, there is a prophecy pointing to its use, and a silent command of God to use it. The possession of a gift is a charter conveying to the possessor permission to use it. When God gives man the power to speak, the possession of that power is his permission to speak; and when God gives woman the power to speak, the gift itself is evidence of the Divine intention. When God gives man the power to paint, he is called to be an artist; and when God gives woman the power to paint, she, too, is called, by that same gift, to do the work which it indicates. And wherever, in all equitable and just functions of civil society, woman has power to do as women do it, a thing which man has power to do as men do it, she is as much called to act, and has as much right to act, as he has.

And I do not ask this for woman's sake. I do not feel the want (though I am not ignorant of it) that women themselves feel, in consequence of the partial and unjust laws which have betided them. They, better than men, can plead their own want in this respect. My plea is not for woman: my plea is for men. And I take the ground on this subject, that *we* need an enlarged sphere for women. Whether *they* need it or not, they can say. The world, human society, man's own comfort, (if it be brought to the basis of a selfish calculation,) every material interest of human life, demands that man and woman should be united, as much in intellectual as in social, in civil affairs as much as in personal, in public as much as in private interests. Men rob themselves and society by prohibiting woman from doing things which she is able to do, and fitted to do.

I advocate a larger use, then, of woman's influence in public affairs; and that the whole subject may be brought to a definite starting point, I will state my position distinctly.

Woman ought to have the same right of suffrage that men have. The moment that is granted, the rest will follow. The vote is the point at which public opinion takes hold on public action. It is the point at which moral and political forces are condensed from thought-forms into the material form of laws, institutions, or public policies. The soul incarnates itself in public affairs by the vote. And in our government, the vote is the wheel and rudder, and controls the motion of the ship. Put that into woman's hand, and she need petition no more for rights, but assume and exercise them.

Our public affairs are susceptible of great advance. It may seem to you that the millennium has come, that parties are perfect, that government goes without a rub, that civil society is in a beatific state! But I have the impression that politics are yet in need of some improvement! There has certainly been great advance in these things, but there is room for still further advance. For, to speak soberly, our public affairs are marked by those faults which we should expect from the preponderance in them of simple man-influence. Force, passion and fraud are very largely employed in their management. Rude force, all manner of uproarious, selfish passions, and base frauds, secreted, or blossoming out upon the skin — these are characteristic of our public affairs. But they are exactly what we should expect would characterize

the administration of man, separated from the direct influence of woman. Without the ameliorations which woman's nature is capable of producing upon him, man stands as trees stand in this wintry night — strong enough of root, strong enough of trunk, and strong enough of branch, but without a leaf, and without a blossom. They cast no shade, and are bleak, rugged, and cheerless, — as bachelors must needs always be! No summer comes to man till leaves come and blossoms come. And as it is in the individual, as it is in the family, so it is in civil and public affairs. The masculine element, whatever strength it may have, whatever cogency of lower human wisdom — wisdom relating to materialities — is deficient in heroic justice, in disinterested kindness, in real moral refinement; these are the very elements which our public affairs need. Shall we neglect that instrumentality which God always employed in the amelioration of society, — the coördination of man and woman in joint influence? Woman is appointed for the refinement of the race. She is God's secular ordinance for purity and goodness. Shall we understand her power, and employ it directly, or shall we ignorantly and by accident take her indirect usefulness?

The need of moral influence in the administration of political affairs is universally conceded. Some propose to act by the preaching of the Gospel. I am one that does. But the power of preaching is to be measured by the forces which it developes.

Preaching is not to supercede natural laws. It is to inspire men to the right uses of all these agencies with which the soul, the body, society, and the physical globe are stored. Will any preaching avail that forgets this? Are we to be oblivious or skeptical of woman's function in the civilization of the race, and to expect, without her, results which God accomplishes only by her presence and active influence?

Since the world began, to refine society has been woman's function. She is God's vicegerent on earth for the end. You may be sure that she that has carried refinement to the household, to the church, to social life, to literature, to art, to every interest except government, will also carry it to legislation, and the whole of civil and public procedure, if it is to be carried there at all.

For a long time, woman has been supposed to be the refiner of the domestic circle. But why should not her power

of refinement be suspected to be as applicable to every other relation in life, as to the household? What is there under the roof of the house that gives this charm of woman such peculiar power and potency there? What is there that hinders it from producing the same effects in the church, in senate-chambers, in legislative halls, in primary meetings, anywhere in the broad sphere of public affairs, that men now acknowledge in the family? My faith is rooted, and grounded, and established, that the cheapest, the easiest, the most natural and proper method of introducing reformation into public affairs, is to give woman a coördinate influence there. Let these two great elements of the sexes go, influencing each other, straight through public affairs, just as now they influence each other in all the private relations of life. That will reform politics and civilize selfish and barbarous statesmanship.

Look, for a moment, at some of the results that would accrue from the granting of the liberty of suffrage to women.

What would be the effect of their votes in the selection of men for offices — town, state, and national? Do you not know, does not every politician know, does not every man that is at all conversant with public affairs know, that you are obliged to choose men for office with reference to those who are to vote for them, and that if men were selected whose election depended as much upon the votes of women as upon the votes of men, not one bad man would be put up, where there are fifty selected now? The voting of women would be the sifting of men throughout the nation.

That is the very difficulty. It is because there are so many brutal hordes, it is because there are so many selfish cliques, it is because there are so many plotting men that set on foot sordid schemes, and resent all interruption, that there is so much opposition to the refining of public affairs by woman's vote. For what man that is gross, what man that is corrupt, would not be blighted before woman's vote, as he would be blighted if lightning from the right hand of God had struck him? Bad men will receive their quietus in that day when woman becomes a voter.

That which would be true in respect to the selection of men for office, would be equally true in respect to all the public questions of the day — all questions that turn upon humanities, or that relate to morals; or that depend upon the higher moral sentiments.

Do you not know that our legislation has been characterized by a selfish expediency? Since the days when the old Revolutionists stopped writing and fighting, since the days when trading and emigrating people, and mixed institutions, began to predominate over the old Revolutionary impulses and discussions, our public affairs have pivoted upon expedients, and not upon principles. Policies, rather than duties, have been our study. Questions fundamental to all governments, of justice, of truth, and political purity, have been even unpopular.

There was never such an anomaly as our community has shown in the last thirty years. The most unpopular and detested of all questions has been that for which the Revolutionary war was fought, for which this government was confederated, and in whose essential spirit our Constitution and laws were established. By a kind of political insanity, this nation has turned the whole popular violence against the inward principle upon which our national life depends. Finance, tariffs, the details of commerce, revenues, have tasked the statesmanship of our day, to the exclusion of questions wide as our race, and which touch society, and human nature itself, at every vital point. From these, public men have turned with contempt or rage, stigmatizing them as sentimentalisms and philanthropisms. The moment questions are propounded which turn on rectitude, on immutable justice, on considerations romantic or heroic, they are scoffed at, they are rudely kicked out of the caucus — no, they never get into the caucus, and are not dreamed of there.

Now, the moment you bring into our public affairs woman's influence, her stronger moral sentiment, her love of disinterested kindness, her deep and ineradicable sentiment of purity, her moral courage, and faith in all that is good, her yearnings and aspirations for the higher, serener, and more heavenly truths and knowledges; the moment you bring together in public affairs virile strength and female refinement — then you will have God's foundation for moral purity and public peace; and great moral interests and questions of humanity will take the place of selfishness and miserable quarrelling expedients. Then, principles will be discussed and applied, and legislation will grow heroic again.

This will also bring civilization into our primary meetings, and decency into our secondary ones. For we have heathen-

ism here as rife as that in any other quarter of the globe. You do not need to go out of New York, to see whatever barbarity or truculent heathenism is to be seen anywhere else on the globe. We keep specimens of every thing this side of perdition, and some, I think, of things the other side.

If it were understood, that in every ward and neighborhood the adult population, the whole of them, men and women, were to control the primary meetings, there would be no more trouble in these meetings than there is in our households. The restraint, the refining influence of woman, would make that orderly which is now like the tussleing of dogs. And that which is true of primary meetings is still more significantly true of legislatures and national assemblies. Woman's influence, if introduced into public affairs, would work in the same direction there that it has worked, and is working, in social life, in literature, and in religious assemblies.

But let us attend to some of the objections that are made to such an introduction of woman's influence into public affairs. It strikes many, before reflection, and none more than women themselves, that a participation in suffrage would subject them to rudeness, and to an exposure painful to delicacy. As if that very rudeness were not the result of woman's absence! As if it were not her very office to carry with her whatever is seemly and decorous!

In the first place, it should be understood, that if women were to vote, there would be an end of indecent voting places. The polls would no longer be in vile precincts, and in pestholes. If father and mother, husband and wife, brother and sister, man and woman, inspired by the sanctity of patriotism, were to go forth together to vote, do you suppose that our elections would be characterized by the vulgarity and violence which now defile them?

What is there in depositing a vote, that would subject a woman to such peculiar exposure? A woman, in dropping a letter into the post-office, is made more public, and is full as much indelicate, as in depositing her vote. A vote is the simplest, the neatest, the most unobtrusive thing imaginable. This white slip of paper drops as quietly and gently as a snow-flake on the top of the Alps—but, like them, when, collected, they descend like avalanches, woe be to the evil which they strike! Let the man who is the most fastidious,

who prides himself most on his refinement, find fault, if he can, with the vote of a woman — a thing that is so easy, so simple, but that would carry into human affairs a power almost like the right hand of the Almighty!

But why this publicity? Why not remain at home, and exert an influence upon public affairs through husband, father, brother?

Because, while woman is excluded with contempt from political duties, her advice and influence at home must always be at the minimum. If once she began to accept public patriotic duties, she then would exert a tenfold indirect influence at home. But, now, men take it for granted that women know nothing of public affairs, and that all their suggestions must, of course, be the result of an ignorant simplicity. A woman is not made a safe adviser by being kept at home in ignorance of all public affairs; and if she informs herself intelligently, then why should she not act just as much as man? She is by nature better than man, of a purer and higher moral tone. Why not help man when most he needs help? It is amusing to hear men, when pressed upon this point, enlarging upon the silent influence of woman — upon the sweetening home affections, upon their bland and gentle restraints or excitements, and declaring a woman's home to be the only appropriate sphere of political influence. But the moment she takes him at his word, and endeavors to incline husband or brother to any political conduct, they turn with lordly authority upon her, saying, "My dear, your proper duties are in the nursery and kitchen. What do you understand of public affairs? Do not concern yourself with things of which you know nothing."

Indeed, there is a large infusion of vulgar arrogance in even good men. They believe that woman was created solely or chiefly for the cradle, the bread-trough, and the needle. These complacent gentlemen suppose that God made man for thought, action, heroism, and woman as nurse, cook, and plaything.

But, I ask, why does not this argument in respect to woman's influence hold just as good in every thing else as in public affairs? Why do you not say, "A woman ought not to be a school-teacher; if she wishes to teach the race, let her influence her father and brothers and husband, and act through them"? Why not say, "A woman ought not to be an

artist, and daub her fingers with paints; let her influence her father and brothers and husband to paint"? or, "A woman ought not to waste her strength in writing; let her influence her father and brothers and husband to write"? Why do you not say, in short, "Woman is a mere silent, interior, reserved force, and man is the universal engine to be set in operation by her?"

There is undoubtedly such a thing as indirect influence, as general influence. But I have noticed, that men who wish things to remain as they are, are in favor always of general influences, in distinction from directly applied forces. It is open, direct, applied force, that abates evil or promotes good.

Such intelligent activity will, as part of its benefit, raise up a public sentiment, in which direct forces will act more efficiently. But there can be no gradual and general influence, where there is no special causation. When men act in their own secular affairs, only the sluggard and the fool expect to reap where they have not sown. Nobody makes out a bank-account under the general influence of commerce. Nobody farms on this principle. The general influence of husbandry never drained a swamp. It is the theory of cultivation *applied* that brings harvests. The general progress of health never cleaned a street; it is sanitary ideas *applied* that do this work. General influences are nothing but the sum of particular influences. If these men who propose leaving evils to be corrected by general influences were to talk to the clouds, they would say, "Oh, never rain; leave all things to the general influence of diffused moisture."

It is further objected: "If woman were to vote, then, of course, she would be eligible to public offices." Well, why not? In every respect in which woman is known to have gifts of administration, why ought she not to exercise them? When a farmer dies, if the wife has executive power, she carries on the farm; when a merchant dies, if the wife has tact, she carries on the business; if an editor dies, if the wife is enterprising and able, she carries on the newspaper; if a schoolmaster dies, and the wife is competent, she carries on the school or academy; and nobody supposes but that this is perfectly right. All through society, in a sort of unasserting way, woman goes out of what is considered her sphere, and nobody thinks but that it is perfectly right. But I hold that

it should be recognized as her right to engage in every thing for which she is fitted, public affairs not excepted. No woman could be elected to the office of a Justice of the Peace, unless there was a general conviction that she had peculiar gifts for its duties. This matter is surrounded with such safeguards of popular prejudice, that no woman will be called to any office, unless it is very apparent that she has a fitness for it. Wherever there are gifts, there should be liberty of exercise. Faculty always demands Function. Every human being has a natural right to do whatever they can do well.

But it is objected, that by mingling in public affairs, women would soon extinguish that delicacy that now gives them both grace and influence. Are we, then, to believe that womanly qualities are God's gift, or only the result of accident and education? If God made woman with a genius of refinement, tenderness, and moral purity, it is not probable that the exercise of large public duty will efface the marks of her original constitution, and that an active patriotism will tarnish her purity, and zeal for public justice will demoralize her nature.

We are not to forget, that women's participation in suffrage will at once change the conditions upon which they are to enter. When men ask, Would it be wise that woman should enter the hurly-burly of the caucus, and mingle with the fanaticism of party fury? — I reply, that her presence would end these evils. Should a man, having an exquisite lamp, burning perfumed oil, refuse to carry it into an unlighted room, lest the darkness should contaminate the flame, all would smile at his ignorance, as if light were not, in its nature, the death of darkness.

And when it is asked, "Would you go among brutal rowdies with your wife and daughter, and subject them to their insults?" — I reply, if it were understood to be not an intrusion, nor a violation of constituted law, but a thing in accordance with both custom and law, I would take my wife and daughter, and walk, I care not into what precinct or neighborhood; and there is not, in the United States, a place where they would not be safe. Or, if there were one drunken creature to mistreat them, there would be five-and-twenty stalwart men to crush the miscreant! For, when it is once the custom for woman to mingle in public affairs with men, there will not be found a class of men in our land that will

not respect her presence. Now and then, I see a man that walks in the street smoking, with a woman on his arm — but only now and then. Once in a while, I see a man that rides in an omnibus smoking, when there is a woman in it — but only once in a while. These are exceptions. Men instinctively reverence women. Nor is this the peculiarity of men of cultivation or wealth. Men who toil at the blacksmith's forge, and in the various other departments of manual labor — men whose hands are so hard that they would almost strike fire from steel — have under their brawny ribs a heart that loves and reveres the purity of woman. And in whatever sphere her duties might call her, if she was admitted to it by custom or law, men would meet her as now they meet her in the sanctuary and in these halls.

But it is said: "It would draw woman from her appropriate sphere. Home is the place of her life." And I would like to know if public affairs do not draw man from his appropriate sphere just as much? Can any man attend to his duties as a citizen, and not give time to them? And yet, does he injuriously abandon his store or his bank? It would not take any more of woman's time than it does of man's. But what is time given for, but to be used in duty? Nay, it would save time to men and women, if a higher spirit could be infused into public affairs. It is sordidness and low ambitions that exact so much time and strength of good men in the conduct of affairs. And if men were morally elevated, they would strike for rectitude without all those struggles and tergiversations which now impede their progress. Attention to public affairs, then, would not draw woman from her appropriate sphere one whit more than it draws man from his.

I do not ask that every woman shall be a candidate for office, or an officer. There is no danger that she would suddenly become wild and rampant, simply because a high moral duty devolved upon her. Intelligence and real moral power sober the silly passions, restrain vagrancy, give stability and discretion. And woman would be a more discreet stayer at home if she were taught wisely how to act in public duty away from home.

Again, it is said that women lose the charm and delicacy of their sex, by mingling in public affairs. No, no; you do not believe any such thing. You do not believe it, who say it; or, you say it without thinking. A great many women,

having received from God the gift of song, sing in public; and no man ever thought of raising this objection in regard to them. Who ever thought of raising it in regard to Jenny Lind? On the appearance here of Madame Sontag, a kind invitation was sent to the clergymen of New York and Brooklyn to attend a preliminary exhibition of her powers in the old Tripler Hall. You may be sure that we were all there; and she sang as she ought to have sung before the assembled clergy of these two cities! When she had finished, Dr. Cox rose, and, with his inimitable eloquence, expressed our united thanks and admiration to her for what she had done; and blessed God that she had the gift and power exhibited. But not a word did he say about exposure, about her being unsexed, or about her being out of her sphere. It was taken for granted, that since God had given her such song-power, it was her duty not to silence it, but to use it for the good of the greatest number. But what peculiar right is there in Art to enfranchise woman, and make that delicate and proper which custom forbids to religion or public affairs? Is it right to sing and wrong to speak in public? Is it delicate for Jenny Lind to confront five thousand faces standing alone upon a platform, and indelicate upon her husband's arm to go forth to the duty of suffrage?

As the different elements of society have developed in succession, they have been obliged to pass through the contention of the democratic and the aristocratic elements. Woman herself is vibrating between these antagonistic forces. For ages, woman has been advanced to honor, influence, office, and the highest public trusts, if she will accept them in aristocratic forms. Women, as members of the ruling classes, are emancipated from many clogs which yet hinder those lower down on the social scale. If it be as a representative of a noble family, or of a public order, woman is permitted to take her place in public affairs. She may be an abbess, a countess, a queen. To-day, the proudest throne on the globe is honored by a woman. No person is shocked that she is at the head of empire. Every reason urged against a larger liberty for woman is illustriously confuted by the dignity, purity and womanly propriety with which Victoria stands before her empire, and before the world.

It is only woman *without a title*, that must have no privileges. Woman, in her own simple self, with nothing but

what God gave her, plain, democratic woman, is not deemed worthy of honor and publicity. With a crown on her brow, she may enter parliaments, and govern empires. With only her own simple personal virtues, she may not lift up her hand to cast a vote! If she represents a power, a state, an art, a class, if she only stand upon an aristocratic base, she is indulged. But woman, in her own nature, and representing her own self, is disowned and rebuffed! Now, as a Christian democrat, I assert for her every right and every privilege that aristocracy accords her. That which is good enough for a queen is not too good for my wife. That which is noble in a duchess is honorable in my daughter.

This, then, is the sum of what I wished to say to you to-night. I have said it more in the expectation that it will work in you as a leaven, than that it will bear immediate fruits. But, as the farmer sows seed in October, that he does not expect to reap till July, so we must sow, and wait patiently for the harvest. I do not know as I shall see the day when woman will occupy her true position in society. My children may, if I do not; and I think that there will be some approach to it, even in my time; for thoughts move faster than they used to.

It is Guyot that says that plants have three periods of growth. The slowest and longest is that of the root; the next fastest is that of the stem; and the last and quickest is that of the blossom and fruit. I have been wont to think that the world grew by the root, till the advent of Christ; that from the advent of Christ to our day, it has been growing by the stem; and that in the period in which we stand, it is growing by the blossom and the fruit. Changes that formerly required a hundred years for accomplishment, now require scarcely a score. Things rush to their accomplishment. And I make this plea in behalf of woman, not without hope that I may see, in my day, an improvement in her condition.

Men will think about this reform, and talk about it. You will not accomplish it by first throwing yourselves into parties; but by talking first, and thinking before you talk, and remembering that we are advocating this change, not because woman needs it, *but because we need it more.*

I stand, to-night, the advocate of *man's rights*; and because we need it, woman should be eligible to all public trusts, and should have the same liberty of suffrage that man now has.

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